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MARX'S THEORY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

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CHAPTER ONE

however, this importance ~~for it is~~ this very importance which

Introduction contribution to what might appear an insignificant

aspect. In this study we wish to examine the theory of Karl Marx - and Frederick Engels - with respect to certain problems concerning the Marxist theory of the relationship of the individual to his society and of the moral significance of the individual within society.

Our investigation into these aspects must necessarily concern itself with others, for we cannot, without being guilty of false and dangerous abstractions, neglect to place our problems in the perspective of the whole of Marxian philosophy. Nevertheless, since we are concerned with specific points, we shall be forced to eliminate from consideration many issues which may arise and to deal cursorily with many others. For example, it is beyond our scope or ability to deal with Marx's economic thought - nor does Marxism as a theory of revolutionary organisation concern us, so much as a philosophical interpretation that it is. We are faced with the necessity of eliminating what is not germane to our particular subject whilst at the same time maintaining the essential unity and integrity of the Marxian system of social analysis. In order to achieve this latter objective we have found it relevant and advisable to introduce the main discussion with a general statement of the nature of the Marxian philosophical position, as well as with a broad picture of the intellectual and political background to that picture. There is no need to emphasise unduly the position of unique importance held by Marx as a thinker. It is essential to note,

however, this importance for it is this very importance which justifies our attention to what might appear an insignificant aspect of his work. Marxism possesses vital and practical problems for the contemporary age. It represents a challenge to the social and economic values and traditions of the age and, equally it possesses, an intellectual argument which demands consideration.

Whilst, in philosophy, we may generally regard the practical effects of doctrines as of little relevance to their truth or validity, we must recognise that the position is different with Marxism. This system stands as a revolutionary doctrine. Its aim is practical; its philosophical analysis establishes both the necessity for action and the goal of that action. Marxism is the expression of an endeavour to change and mould social development. It meets and attempts to refute doctrines both on the plane of reason and on that of practice. Thus, it is as a political weapon as well as a philosophical interpretation that it itself must be discussed. We cannot without violating its inherent unity refuse to consider it as a partisan ideology. We dare not,, merely because it is a partisan ideology, refuse to consider its claim to be true and self-coherent.

We must decide how, if applied, its theory of individualism would affect the actual position of men in society. We must consider whether it has, in fact, a consistent theory to be applied and, if so, what this theory is and whence it is derived. We must see in what way it is connected with the underlying philosophical presuppositions, metaphysical and methodological, of Marxism.

As a materialist philosophy Marxism is related to that position popularised in the early post-Renaissance period by such thinkers as Galileo, Hobbes and others. Modern materialism is derived from the doctrine that the nature of the Universe and human behaviour may be studied by those methods which obtained successful application within natural science. The initial pre-supposition underlying this belief was that all the phenomenon with which we are faced are reducible to material relationships such as cause-effect and are in reality problems demanding scientific treatment as involving the material interaction of bodies.

Dialectical Materialism

Marxian dialectical materialism stands ^{partly} partially in this tradition of thought and partially in the opposing tradition. As 'dialectical' it represents an attempt to maintain the Idealist tradition. Dialectics, originally conceived ^{by Idealism} as the motion of thought in the analysis of ideas or as the development and clarification of ideas, are fundamental to this tradition. Thought is conceived as having a logical development and as being based upon a logical pattern. Dialectical thought rests upon the premise that ideas are not static and that the truth is attainable only through the clash of ideas in debate, argument, discussion and criticism.

We have in knowledge, that is, not merely a set of independent and absolute truths. The coherence and advance of knowledge rests upon the inherent dynamic of ideas which, themselves, are not final but mere stages in gradually advancing coherence. Flat

denials and complete contradiction are inadmissible on dialectical logic for every truth is partial. Every denial involves a qualifying and positive affirmation. Every doctrine or idea represents both a denial and an affirmation. Truth is attainable, therefore, on the sole method of removing inconsistency and incoherence by the clash of partial truths. Each such clash brings forth a higher, more complete and less limited truth.

Each such advance is termed a synthesis which is the product of a process of negation of thesis by anti-thesis. Further, each such advance is possessed of a higher degree of truth than either of the earlier elements. Each synthesis, in its turn, produces its own negation by the necessary incompleteness of itself. Only that which is completely true would not produce an antithesis since that which is completely true is, on dialectical logic, that which is utterly self-coherent and complete. No isolated fact or theory is, therefore, completely true. We may, however, attain degrees of truth by the application of this theory of the movement of thought.

Dialectical logic involves, therefore, the non-validity of the law of contradiction, the acceptance of a theory of degrees of truth and the idea that a partial truth produces its own opposite or negation. It involves, too, that the true is the self-consistent and that the true or the real is that which conforms to Reason by which it is discovered. There is, there is asserted, an essential compatibility between Reason or Mind and Truth for, unless there was, the latter would be unattainable by the former.

The implications of this doctrine are manifold. They may

be stated briefly as follows:

1. Dialectic involves the idea that men share reason and are essentially rational creatures.
2. Dialectics presumes the necessity for mutual aid in the search for truth and, therefore, the natural basis of human co-operation.
3. By seeing truths as gaining their real status within a larger and more coherent system, dialectics involves the idea that the isolated individual parts of any system are less real and less truly themselves when they are conceived in isolation.
5. Dialectical logic repudiates any conception of society as composed of independent minds belonging to atomistic individuals who can gain intercourse with others only by means of external contact.

Marxism rests upon dialectical or Idealist logic. The importance of which the Idealist method has for Marxism will become clear as we proceed. We must, however, before tracing that importance, show in what form dialectics reached Marxism and how it affected crucially Marx's theory of the individual⁽¹⁾.

Dialectics as we have seen is a logic of change. Purely as logic, however, such change has no temporal nature. It was, rather, conceived as the process of the explication of inherent

(1) That political theory not based upon the Idealist logical tradition of Plato, Aristotle and others, terminating in Hegel and the British Idealists, involves a radically different individualism as we shall later show.

implications within the order of the world^{of Ideas}. Originally, it was, therefore, ~~as~~ unconnected with temporal evolution ^{and} ~~as~~ the order of Nature was conceived as static. Such was the Greek Idealist conception which underwent modification under the impact of both Greek materialist philosophy and of later historical and scientific theories.

Thus, although a logical doctrine, dialectical theory did not remain unaffected by such doctrines as those of Heraclitus which interpreted change not as mere explication but as a temporal development within the natural world. "Everything is and also is not, for everything is in flux, is constantly changing, constantly coming into being and passing away"(2). The logical system and the naturalist theory of change became in that doctrine inevitably fused. Dialectical logic passed into dialectical philosophy of change and flux and science found in it that metaphysical basis upon which it later erected those theories of historical change and evolution of which Marxism is an expression.

As a scientific and philosophical principle dialectics revealed the inadequacy of the earlier doctrine, already disproved in the realm of ideas, that what is cannot be something else, that "a thing either exists or it does not exist". It showed in the natural world the validity of the principle which it had demonstrated in the elucidation of truth, that it is by no means true that "positive and negative absolutely exclude one another". It

(2) F. Engels. Socialism, Utopian and Scientific. p.156 Vol. 1, (Karl Marx, Selected Works, Lawrence and Wishart)

showed^{as true} that the doctrine which held that ^aview "always reaches a limit beyond which it becomes one-sided, limited, abstract and loses its way in insoluble contradictions. And this is so because in considering individual things it loses sight of their connections; in contemplating their existence it forgets their coming into being and passing away....."(3).

Dialectical thought became central in the Idealist tradition and it expanded to include a philosophy of history, ~~and~~ ^{It} was in this form - as a philosophy of history - that, with Hegel, it influenced Marx. Marx, it must be remembered, was a Hegelian during his early years and Marxism itself represents not so much a revolt against Hegelianism as a modification and correction thereof.

Marx,, therefore, accepted the Hegelian principle that the logical categories of dialectical thought must be applied to human knowledge and philosophy. Hegel presented "the whole natural, historical and spiritual world as a process, and attempted to show the internal inter-connections in the development of history. Hegel emphasized the non-finalistic nature of human thought and knowledge. His importance for Marx lies in the fact that he asserted that "truth, the cognition of which is the business of philosophy, (was) no longer an aggregate of finished dogmatic statements....."(4)

It was for Marx, in his critique of Hegelianism, to relate

(3) Ibid. p158

(4) F. Engels, "Ludwig Fetterbach". *Selected Works* p 421 Vol II

this position to the concrete economic and political changes in society. In this critique Marx claimed that on Hegel's own principles his system of thought was undermined for, although his doctrines repudiated "system-building" in philosophy, "he was compelled to make a system, and in accordance with all traditional requirements, a system of absolute truth". (X) Marx recognised that on his own premises Hegel should postulate history as the only absolute truth. Hegel, however, is forced to end his philosophy and this he does by introducing the Absolute Idea from which the historical process emanates and to which it returns. History ends with human cognition of the Absolute Idea - and this cognition ^{Hegel} imagined was reached in the Hegelian system. Thus Marx and Engels hold that, starting by repudiating dogmatism, Hegelianism ends in a finalistic dogma. For this reason, they continue, Hegelianism was conservative instead of being revolutionary and the source of this contradiction lies in the purely Idealist application of dialectical logic which is not applied to real events in the real world.

"The thoughts within his mind were to him not the more or less abstract images of real things and processes, but on the contrary, things and their development were to him only the images made real of the 'idea' existing somewhere or other already before the world existed" (5). Hegelianism which grasped correctly and with insight many individual inter-connections" was unsound for, both in its logical and metaphysical theories and its view of the

(5) Engels, ~~Ludwig Feuerbach~~.
Socialism, Utopian and Scientific, Sci. Works p 161

relation of the individual to the state, it missed the essentially revolutionary nature of dialectical thought. As such, and despite its enormous contributions, Hegelianism, for Marx and Engels, was incapable, in itself, of fruitful development. It had to give way to "real and positive knowledge of the world"(6).

Marx realised that such knowledge would not be attained by a rejection of Hegelianism, but rather by a retreat to a modified version of 18th century historical naturalism. He boasted that he had stood Hegel on his head; in fact he did not. Rather, in place of the Hegelian dialectic which "begins with thought, goes on to nature, and ends with mind", Marx postulated a different order by referring "to the first and second terms only, not the third". His dialectic "began with nature and went on to thought", whereas Hegel's began with thought and went on to nature.(7)

Marx's return to a naturalistic position took place concurrently with a vigorous criticism by him of all earlier materialism. The basic point of the critique is that these philosophies, whilst correctly giving priority to the real world, are fundamentally inaccurate in their reliance on a monistic theory of force or energy. They are crude philosophies resulting from the transference of the categories of physical science into fields where they are not applicable. They do not solve, any more than conservative Idealism solves, such problems as that of the nature of individualism or the source of political obligation and social

(6) Engels, op cit. p 425

(7) R.G. Collingwood, The Idea of History p. 123.

change.

The error of early materialism is seen by Marx to be the opposite error to that of Hegelianism for, unlike the latter, early naturalism based its methodology upon a process of detaching phenomena "from their natural or historical connections ... (and of examining) each one separately, as to its nature, its special causes and effects, etc." (8). This method, derived from the resolute - compositive method of Galileo and, later, Hobbes - was analysis of problems into individual parts and the classification of these parts and their processes into various classes. (9) Engels comments that this method has left us as a legacy the habit of observing natural objects and natural processes in their isolation, detached from the whole vast interconnection of things, and therefore not in their motion but in their repose; not as essentially changing, but as fixed constants; not in their life but in their death. Valid as this method was in the scientific advances of the period, when, as with Bacon and *Locke*, it was transferred to philosophy it falsely regarded "things and their mental images, ideas, (as) isolated, to be considered one after another, apart from each other, rigid fixed objects of investigation given once for all". (10)

Being unable to think dialectically, this form of materialism produced not an acceptable theory of the dynamic inter-relation of mind and matter, part and whole, individual and group, but a doct-

(8) F. Engels, Socialism, Utopian and Scientific p. 161 ff

(9) Political Philos. of Hobbes by Strauss.

(10) F. Engels, Socialism, Utopian and Scientific. Ibid

rine of the monism of force upon which even intellectual became reduced to a form of physical energy and the ultimate basis, the essential foundation, of the universe was believed to be material force. Man became a machine, society a field in which individual machines clashed and co-existed. And for Marxism the fundamental error of this system lay in the fact that it was an "exclusive application of the standards of mechanics to processes of a chemical and organic nature - in which processes it is true, the laws of mechanics are also valid, but are pushed into the background by other and higher laws - (and this application) constituted a specific ... limitation of classical French materialism".(11) This materialism could not "comprehend the universe as a process". Nature became conceived as static, society as a mechanical interrelation of materially determined and atomistic individuals and man himself as a creature without free-will. Marxism regarded this interpretation as partial and incomplete.

Materialism conceived "the object, reality, sensuousness..... only in the form of the object or contemplation but not as human sensuous activity, practice, not subjectively".(12) Its error, as opposed to the Idealist mistake of emphasizing human abstract activity, was that it could not see man as an agent but merely as an object of natural processes. Marx, therefore, condemns both the materialism which denies the partial independence of human activity and the idealism which denies the reality of the empirical world and which asserts the primacy of thought. And we shall

(11) Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach. p 437 part II

(12) Marx, Theses on Feuerbach.

note the importance of these objections for an investigation into individualism. More broadly, the principles embodied in these two critiques are of immense importance for Marxism.

Hegelianism Marxism regards as partial for, although it truly sees history as a process of "causal interconnection of the progressive movement from the lower to the higher, which asserts itself through all zig-zag movements and temporary set-backs", it falsely sees this process as "a miserable copy of the self-movement of the concept going on from eternity ... independent of the thinking brain.(13)

Materialism, ^{however,} represents the partial, yet valuable, discoveries of natural science as capable of general application in all fields. It repudiates human activity and true social life on the principles of mechanism.

Marxism accepts the validity of the application of dialectical logic to history. It accepts the Hegelian doctrine summed up in the following statement from Hegel's "Science of Logic", (14) "The only thing which is required for scientific progress, an elementary principle for the understanding of which we should really strive, is the recognition of the logical principle that the negative is just as much a positive, or that the contradictory does not really resolve into nothing, into an abstract nothingness, but actually only into the negation of a special content..... In so far as the resultant, the negation, is a definition it has content. It is a new conception, but a higher and richer concep-

(13) F. Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach *Self-Works* p 422

(14) Quoted by M. Beer, *Life and Teaching of Karl Marx* p. 19-20.

tion than the preceding one; for it has been enriched by the negation or antithesis of this; it therefore contains it, and more than contains it, being indeed the synthetic unity of itself and its contrary". Marxism accepts this and applies it to the struggle of classes in history, the building of society, the relation of mind and matter.

Marxism accepts as valid the methods of materialism upon the lower levels. It accepts moreover the attempt to show a natural causal interconnection between events in the real world. It revives the principle that philosophy rests upon science. Marxism merges materialism and Idealism into what it calls dialectical materialism.

Dialectical materialism is essentially a theory which applies the ideas of logical movement to the natural world. Within the term "natural world" is included, for Marx, society and political and economic events. Basically, it sees this world as constantly changing according to particular patterns of movement the nature of which we have ^{out-}already lived. The underlying principle is that of a clash between partial truths, in the case of thought, and incomplete and non-self-coherent phenomena, in the case of science or society. Each of the elements within these clashes is partially real yet the partiality of each 'produces' the antithesis or negation of the element. The overcoming of this contradictory situation produces a higher, more complete, synthesis which, in its turn, produces its own opposite. The very nature of such clashes makes reality coherent for they demonstrate its indivisibility and its interdependence. Each level is dependant upon

every other; every element is both dependent upon and in contradiction with every other within the whole.

Marxism claims that dialectical materialism is the true metaphysical basis of all knowledge and hence our investigations into Marx's theory of the individual is an investigation into an aspect of dialectical materialism. Dialectical materialism, whilst it does not prescribe the detailed method of each science, it is regarded as providing the methodological framework of all science. Marxism claims that every event or phenomenon must be seen as a relation to a whole and that, as isolated, such events or phenomena are incomplete. We shall find that just as we cannot truly estimate the nature of a cell or an atom or a wheel without reference to its function, its history and its environment so we cannot understand the individual without reference to equivalent factors surrounding and modifying ^{him} them. We shall see that for Marx, although he never reduces one level of knowledge to another, individualism must be studied dialectically since the formal principles of dialectics are universal. In the case of the individual, his nature must be seen in terms of history and economic interest and in terms of his inherent social nature which these express.

We must, because of its importance, examine rather more thoroughly the Marxist theory of the various dialectical laws the application of which to our problem will become obvious later. These laws are held to be valid in philosophic and scientific method and are put forward as an explanation of the coherent pattern and motion of things and thought. This, like Hegel's, is a

revolutionary theory. It makes history and development towards newer and higher forms cardinal in political and scientific theory. Nevertheless, it must not be confused with Darwinian evolutionism. As Vaughan warns:(15)

"To them (the Darwinians) evolution is, in the first instance, a key to the mysteries of a world which lies outside and apart from man; which human reason has no share in constituting; in relation to which, the only function of reason is to apprehend and to interpret it. In this sense, the part of evolution is to simplify the endless diversity of organic - and to some extent also of inorganic - nature; to trace the stages by which the higher forms of life, or being, have through countless ages been elaborated from the lower". For Hegel and Marx, however, evolution is not separable from the subject and from the development of consciousness. We do not stand aside from its processes, we are part of them.

The development which dialectical materialism traces is not to be visualised as a straight line, but rather as a zig-zag. This is a basic principle, and, applying it to social development, Engels says:(16) "the historical fact upon which dialectics insists is that the rise of each civilisation has represented a loss as well as a gain, and the fall of each civilisation ... a gain as well as a loss". Better expressed, we may say that the historical process - in nature, evolution, in society (history) - follows

(15) "Studies in the History of Political Philosophy" p. 144

(16) Quoted Strachey, "Theory and Practice of Socialism" p.382

a spiral movement, at each successive level contradictions are overcome, and each new level represents a synthesis, a contradiction, and simultaneously, a conditioned product, of a less consistent stage. Each stage is a negation of the previous stage, each negation being itself negated.

This is known as the law of the 'negation of the negation'. No negation is a flat contradiction for, as we have seen, bare denial is inadmissible in dialectical logic. As in logic, so in history; there is no contradiction only contrariety. This law is related to another: "the interpenetration of opposites".

This may be explained as follows. Each phase is relatively incomplete because it is incoherent and self-contradictory. This means that each phase produces its own opposite or negation which, though also partial and incomplete, negates it. This relation of opposites, each qualifying the other, makes them interdependent for each represents partially that truth or coherence which each is striving to attain.

Negation itself takes place in the transformation of quantity into quality and quality into quantity. This concept is illustrated in science by the production of a qualitatively different substance steam when the amount of heat applied to water is increased.⁽¹⁷⁾ Similarly, all change is conceived by Marx as gradual, the factors promoting it accumulating it until they produce a sufficiently self-contradictory state. When this occurs a qualitative change - in politics, a revolution - takes place.

(17) Hegel in his 'Logic' gives a similar example to illustrate this law. cf. M. Beer, "Life and Teaching of Karl Marx" p. 20.

Underlying these laws is the doctrine that: "so long as we consider things as static, lifeless, each one by itself, alongside of and after each other, it is true that we do not seem up against any contradiction in them."⁽¹⁷⁾ We find certain qualities which are partly common to, partly diverse from, and even contradictory to each other, but which in this case are distributed among different objects and therefore contain no contradiction. Within the limits of this sphere of thought we can get along on the basis of the usual metaphysical mode of thought. But the position is quite different as soon as we consider things in their motion, their change, their reciprocal influence on one another. Then we immediately become involved in contradictions.

Engels asserts that even motion itself involves contradiction - a state of being in one place and yet potentially in another. And life, which is regarded as a form of motion, is itself a contradiction for each living thing is at once both itself and yet something else. And thought, as we have seen, moves through contradictions. Political life involves that conflict between the state and the individual and between various classes and individuals.

These contradictions are not rigid, they are overcome as their quantitative effect accumulates to the point where a new synthesis is possible. And we should remember that this synthesis is, in social affairs, produced in a revolutionary situation. (18)

(18) F. Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach". S.W. Volm p. 435

Mind and Matter

Before leaving the general outline of dialectical materialism we must discuss one important point. In any discussion of the nature of society we must bear in mind that no self-consistent theory of individualism can be maintained unless a consistent theory of the relations of mind and matter is also held. Marxism is faced with the problem of whether matter can think. If it cannot then Marxism must either fall into a dualism, the resolution of which would undermine either its materialism or its dialecticalism or it must become a monism by reducing matter to mind or mind to a mere epiphenomenon of matter. If this last is the case, Marxism must become a crude determinist theory which would make the solution of the problem of individualism impossible on any basis save that of Hobbes'.

Dialectical materialism, however, answers the problem by asserting that whilst mind is matter it has laws of its own and is capable of an independence as against matter on a lower level. Marxism holds, firstly, that mind is a process rather than a substance. Moreover, what this process perceives is sensuous reality. Marxism postulates a unity of mind and matter on the principle that "the material, sensuously perceptible world to which we ourselves belong is the only reality; and that our consciousness and thinking, however supra-sensuous they may seem, are the product of a material bodily organ, the brain. Matter is not a product of mind, but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter.(19) Although materialism, this doctrine maintains its

(19) F. Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach" S.W. Volm. I p 435

essentially dialectical character by asserting that "thought, mind, is not a substance added to matter, it is a function of a certain kind of matter".(20) "Marxism", says Lewis, "does not deny the reality either of life or mind. It asserts, however, that they are functions of a highly organised matter on the organic level....."(21). Its laws are not those of the mechanical level, nor are its laws beyond scientific analysis.

The important point is, however, not that Marxism repudiates mechanical materialism or absolute idealism but that in doing so it holds that consciousness and its objects, mind and matter, the thinker and his environment, are not divided but ^{form} a unity. Mind is not reduced to matter so much as both are manifestations, on different levels, of natural processes. Ideas are derived from the empirical world but they are not mere impressions upon a passive receiving tablet - the mind. Marxism stands with Idealism in holding the creative character of thought. Cognition requires active participation by the thinker and in this sense we create what we think. Idealism developed this aspect of the matter and made reality dependent upon thinking; materialism ignored it and made mind a passive contemplative receptacle of impressions. Marxism dialectically unites these partial truths. Similarly it makes mind a high form of matter and matter a low form of mind. Both are one; mind and matter are not opposing extremes.

(20) J. Lewis, "Marxism and Modern Idealism" p. 16

(21) Ibid.

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(20) J. Lewis, "Marxism and Modern Idealism" p. 16

(21) Ibid.

In fact, Marxism regards the debate between Idealism and materialism as based upon a fallacy. "It is a mistake to prove that mind exists as something over against matter. But it is equally a mistake to prove that matter is mindless matter can think (and) thinking, being real enough, nevertheless, never takes place except in brains".(22) In short, the Marxist solution is in the form of a resolution of the conflict by a synthesis.

We shall find that this solution is important in the solution of other difficulties, derived from the same original problem, concerning the nature and degree of determinism in historical development, in the development of ideology and in the interaction of the individual thinker or leader upon the class and society to which he belongs.

At the moment, however, we must leave these general principles and turn to our examination of their application to more specific problems.

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(22) Lewis, op cit.

CHAPTER TWO

The Cult of Individualism

We have not the opportunity to devote excessive space to an historical survey of the conditions of society prior to the rise of Marxism. There are, however, certain aspects of this background which are relevant to our subject.

With the breakdown of the mediaeval social structure and the opening of the era of Cartesian philosophy, Europe entered a new era. Capitalism which, as Lewis Mumford says, (p. 159 Condition of Man), "was the greatest heresy of the Middle Ages: the chief challenge to the ideal claims of Christianity(and which, indeed) had been nourished in the very bosom of the Church and almost from the first had the protection of the Papacy", was the prevailing economic and social structure.

The economic nature of capitalism will be discussed in general later, we shall turn now to a consideration of the new outlook which developed under Capitalism and it will be convenient to contrast it at points with that of the preceding era. The greatest challenge which Capitalism presented to the Mediaeval order was moral. "The Capitalist personality", says Mumford (Ibid p. 161) "directed to self-help and gain, was the antithesis to the Christian who sought to love his neighbour as himself Avarice ceased to be a sin: the minute attention to the case of worldly goods, the hoarding of pennies, the unwillingness to spend

one's surplus on others - these habits were useful for capital saving Riches now acquired sanctity: they opened the gates of the Kingdom. They furnished the power. They created the Glory".

Industry, commerce, based upon the desire for private profit undermined the old social structure and destroyed the mediaeval community. "Social justice was more important than private advantage". (Mumford Ibid 163). A new cult of individualism arose. This individualism transformed the valuational, moral codes. The individual had become the centre, around whom the economic life centred and upon whom the social and political organisation of society rested. The economic man became, in the 19th century, an entity undreamed of in the earlier epoch, but whose roots lay in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The philosophy of the age was best expressed by Hobbes and Descartes. In the former's work was expressed the new conception of social life based upon the struggling of human atoms. For Hobbes society was a battleground, man's life a struggle for power - a struggle between what Mumford calls 'natural automata'. Society is for Hobbes an aggregation of individuals held together by the state.

For Descartes the problem of philosophy became ultimately concerned with the individual. A.N. Whitehead says (Science & Modern World p. 173): "Modern philosophy is tinged with subjectivism, as against the objective attitude of the ancients. The same change is to be seen in religion. In the early history of the Christian Church, the theological interest centred in discus-

sions on the nature of God, the meaning of the Incarnation, and apocalyptic forecasts of the ultimate fate of the world. At the Reformation, the Church was torn asunder by dissension as to the individual experiences of believers in respect to justification. The individual subject of experience had been substituted for the total drama of all reality. Luther asked: "How am I justified?" Modern philosophers have asked: "How do I have knowledge?" The emphasis lies upon the subject of experience.

The problem of philosophy, that is, became, with Descartes in particular, centred upon the individual thinking subject. The individual, considered in isolation from his fellows, became the starting point of metaphysics as he had become the centre of political and social life.

The new attitude reached its height in the late 18th and 19th centuries. With increasing mechanisation and industrialism came the increasing concentration of philosophical and political thinking upon the needs and desires of individuals. But it must not be imagined that the individualistic tendencies in thought and social action, did not go through a development. A long tradition of hedonistic and utilitarian individualism exists. It found its expression in the works of many Cartesian thinkers.

Once given the Cartesian bias, which Descartes summed up in his famous dictum "Cogito ergo sum", philosophy developed upon the subjectivist and individualistic lines. In religion there was a tendency to protest the sanctity of the individual and his

right to equality with his fellows before God; in political theory the doctrines of equal rights, equality of opportunity, the 'sanctity of the individual' appeared; and in general it became held that "I must decide the truth according to my 'lights'". The moral theory preached by thinkers since Hobbes was based on the principle of self-interest. Pleasure and pain became synonyms for good and evil and they determined what men did. In the struggle for existence the individual recognised - and, on the prevailing theory, 'ought' only to recognise - one principle, viz. self-interest, self-preservation, pleasure. "It is for them (pleasure and pain) alone to point out what we ought to do as well as to determine what we shall do". (Jeremy Bentham quoted by Mumford op. cit. p. 311).

The trend has many facets. We cannot here detail them. We may mention, for example, the growth of the historical theory which saw history as a struggle between individuals, the trend in the arts towards 'individual self-expression and in philosophy the development of individualist anarchism'.

Of this latter trend Max Stirner is an example. His doctrine contained the logical conclusion of the thinking of earlier individualists who had based their ideas upon a struggle for power among individuals but who regarded community life (the State) as the protection of all in the carrying on of life. Stirner emphasised greatly the importance not merely of the individual; he fought for the supremacy of the ego:

"Let us therefore not aspire to community but to one-sidedness."

Let us not seek the most comprehensive 'human society', but let us seek in others only means and organs which we may use as our property! As we do not see our equals in the tree, the beast, so the presupposition that others are our equals springs from a hypocrisy. No one is my equal, but I regard him, equally with all beings, as my property". (23)

This attitude was one implicit in the very nature of capitalist competition. It was against it that Marx and Engels directed their moral critique. It is to this critique that we shall now turn.

The Moral and Historical Critique of Capitalism:

Marxism, however scientific it may claim to be, is motivated by a moral attitude towards its subject matter. The analysis of prevailing and previously existing societies reveals this moral attitude at the very outset. In the preface to the Communist manifesto Engels refers to the purpose of his work and Marx's to be that of "freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression and class-struggles" (Selected Works p. 793). It is of fundamental importance that this position should be made clear. Marxism as we shall have occasion to see repeatedly does not regard itself as an 'objective' science. As with Hegel, so with Marx - the evolutionary process is not apart from man and his consciousness. Man is part of it. He does not stand aside from it nor does he, recognising his intimate connection with it, allow

(23) M. Stirner, "The Ego and His Own" p. 227.

himself passively to become a part of it. He is active, practical and stands in a moral relationship to the historical process. Man actively takes sides in the class-struggle.

The Communist manifesto contains a statement of this ethical position. We need consider the statement, for example, that 'the bourgeoisie has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motelly feudal ties that bound man to his 'natural superiors', and has left us ^{no} other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash-payment' It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless infeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom - Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation".

Every occupation, every action has become valued in terms of its money value, every personal relation - including the family - has become a money relation. It had, moreover, become true, even in Marx's day, that the bourgeoisie brought with it inequality, imperialism and colossal, destructive war. The whole basis of industrial organisation that had developed was the turning of men to machines. "Masses of labourers", says Marx, "crowded into the factory, are organised like soldiers not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois state, they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the over-looker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer

himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is".

In his analysis of Feuerbach - and we can point to many other examples of this train of thought - Engels examines the status of moral values in class-society⁽²⁴⁾. In this examination he remarks that capitalism denies to the majority, just as much as feudalism or slave-society, any equality of right to the pursuit of happiness. The processes of capitalist economy - as epitomised in the Stock Exchange - express the selfish urge towards individual gain.

In "The German Ideology" we get a further illustration of Marx's attitude to the results of capitalist economy: "The antagonism of town and country can exist as a result of private property. It is the most crass expression of the subjection of the individual under the division of labour, under a definite activity forced upon him - a subjection which makes one man into a restricted town-animal, the other into a restricted country-animal, and daily creates anew the conflict between their interests. Labour is here again the chief thing, power over individuals, and as long as the latter exists, private property must exist".

The individual is subjected under Capitalism; it is this subjection that Communism seeks to end.

Let us examine the integration between this moral attack and

(24) The Marxist attack upon moral values seems to contradict what we have said. Marxism insists upon the conditioned nature of all beliefs, ideologies and philosophies, but this does not preclude it from having a moral attitude. This question, however, is not easily dismissed and we shall return to it.

Marx's more general theory of the development.

We have seen in our earlier examination of the dialectical bases of Marxist philosophy that each successive stage of development is both the product of, and itself contains, inherent contradictions. In the realm of social development - history - these contradictions are manifold, but may broadly be seen as the clash of classes.

For Marxism history is, therefore, of fundamental importance. Every historical epoch, every society that has appeared, is the product of division into social classes. The dominant class in every epoch establishes the general form of the society. The prevailing ideology, political forms, are the ideas and institutions of the ruling class.

The Capitalist society is the creation of the bourgeoisie which established the social order based on "free competition, freedom of movement, equal rights for commodity owners ..." (25). The old methods of production were superseded by large-scale machinery; large-scale industry required large and concentrated labour-force.

Under Capitalist mode of production the instruments of labour, which under the earlier system had been individually owned, became concentrated in the hands of a relatively small class. This concentration was the achievement of the bourgeoisie, which developed in the earlier mediaeval epoch.

In the historical epoch preceding the present bourgeois order

(25) Engels, Anti-Duhring p. 295.

there developed the capitalist mode of production - the concentrated industrial machine. This developed as the techniques of production improved, as the factory replaced the individual workshop. Production became social. The division of labour changed its form.

The division of labour is the root of the class-division in society. Before examining this principle we must realize that for the Marxist conception of history it is the economic relations of society - the methods and relationships of production, distribution and exchange - "is the basis of every social order". This principle Marx discusses as follows:

The basic principle of the materialist conception of history is "the way in which men produce their means of subsistence depends first of all on the nature of the actual means they find in existence and have to reproduce This mode of production is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part" "The whole internal structure of the nation itself depends upon the stage of development reached by its production and its internal and external intercourse. How far the productive forces of a nation are developed is shown most manifestly by the degree to which the division of labour has been carried. Each new productive force, in so far as it is not merely a quantitative extension of productive forces already known brings about a further development of the division of labour"(26).

(26) German Ideology p. 8

(29) German Ideology p. 10.

The division of labour has various important results: the variety of economic activities - commerce, industry and agriculture - are separated from each other and there is the division between, the separation of, town and country. Each new form of ownership is bound up with the development of the division of labour.

The first form of ownership is tribal ownership, corresponding to undeveloped productive methods. The social structure is based upon patriarchal family relationship and slavery. (27)

We shall not trace in detail the anthropological and historical theories of Marx and Engels. We shall merely summarise the various stages of dialectical historical development which they postulate.

After tribal ownership, comes "ancient communal and State ownership" based upon slavery; but containing within its general framework developing private ownership. But this is not a normal, prevailing phenomenon, and the highly developed class structure of society is complete.

Thirdly, (28) we arrive at feudal relationships. As with the above mentioned forms feudalism is "based on a community" (29) with the peasantry replacing the slaves as the oppressed class. The feudal form of society produced, however, its own destruction in that with the growth of towns there developed within the bourgeois forms of production. Town came into conflict with

(27) Marxism postulates the natural state of society as primitive communism - a form of common ownership and classlessness.

(28) Here we are ignoring the influence of wars of conquest and the partial growth in Rome of private ownership and the plebian class.

(29) German Ideology p. 12.

country, and although the mediaeval social structure became adapted to the necessities of trade - with the development of guilds and communal markets - it was from the towns that the bourgeois order sprang. Feudalism was a country form, a social organisation of agricultural civilisation.

The general principle which we may derive from the Marxist historical account is that each political and social form is based upon the economic structure, i.e. that economic relationships are historically basic.

Men make their own history but not in an incoherent or perfectly unconnected fashion. The existence of classes, which is "bound up with particular, historic, phases in the development of production" (Marx to Weydemeyer), is basic to the understanding of history for it is in the clash of classes that we see the historic process manifesting itself. Thus it is in the necessities of this process, which are rooted in the 'material' conditions, i.e. needs, desires and relationships of each epoch, that we must seek the key to historical understanding. Necessity overrides historical accident, in the long run. And this necessity is ultimately economic necessity.

Marxism insists that the basic determining influence of economic factors in history is not rigid or absolute. In our next section we shall deal with the status which intellectual and ideological factors attain in this theory. At this point we wish to establish the general position of Marx and Engels. The importance of the individual in Marxist theory is, of course, intimately bound up with the doctrine of historical dialectical materialism.

The state, we must at this point mention, is seen by this theory in a peculiar light. Marx insists upon the distinction between state and society. The state is organ of society which is produced by the contradictions eventuating from the division of labour and class division. It is neither of the conflicting classes but nevertheless it represents the organised political force of the ruling class while maintaining a semblance of independence.

"Society gives rise to certain common functions which it cannot dispense with. The persons selected for these functions form a new branch of the division of labour within society. This gives them particular interests, distinct, too, from the interests of those who gave them their office; they make themselves independent of the latter and - the state is in being". With the state is created political aspects of society and the struggle for control of the state machinery - in our day police, army, government departments - is the political struggle. There develops a clash between the economic interests and 'forces' and the political which latter are concerned to maintain their independence. This clash is one in which economic motivation is "ultimately" irresistible.(30) This allows a considerable amount of modification to take place within the economic framework. Political and legal institutions and codes modify, "react upon", divert the narrow economic movement and undermine the narrow determinist position of

^{German Ideology}
(30) The emphasis upon the ultimately determining power of economic motivation is typical of Marxist confusion on this point and indicative of the partially realised attempt to make a "science" of history.

certain less critical and careful sections of Marx and Engels.

The State appears then, as an independent authority over and above the clash of classes. It is, however, only independent to a very limited extent. Dialectically there must exist an interdependence and interaction between cause and effect, between 'civil society' (i.e. the economic and productive aspects of society) and the State. Yet the State exists to finalise existing class relationships and to maintain those relationships economic and social which have developed. Whilst it may in turn modify these the State is the expression of the class division of society.

We could do no better than follow the conclusion which Marx draws from ^{his} theory of history: (31)

(1) "In the development of productive forces there comes a stage at which productive forces and means of intercourse are called into existence, which, under existing relationships, only causes mischief, and which are no longer productive forces but destructive forces (machinery and money); and connected with this a class is called forth, which has to bear all the burdens of society without enjoying its advantages, which, ousted from society, is forced into the most decided antagonism to all other classes; a class which forms the majority of all members of society, and from which emanates the consciousness of the necessity of a fundamental revolution, the communist consciousness, which may, of course, arise among other classes too through the contemplation of the situation of this class. (my italics).

(2) The conditions under which definite productive forces can

(31) German Ideology p. 68

be applied, are the conditions of the rule of a definite class of society whose social power, deriving from its property, has its practical-idealistic expression in each case in the form of the State; and, therefore, every revolutionary struggle is directed against a class, which till then had been in power"

Marx continues to state that the aim of the communist revolution is not, as with earlier revolutions, ~~the~~ aimed at a redistribution of the mode of activity of society (i.e. a change in ownership and control of productive forces), but is aimed at the abolition of the whole mode of activity i.e. at the abolition of classes, nationalities and "labour". Further this revolution is essentially a mass movement against the conditions and relationships of 'civil society' and, as he emphasises elsewhere (e.g. The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon), against the existence of the State itself.

Philosophy and the Individual

The individual is in Marxist philosophy in a peculiarly important relation to philosophic activity itself. This relationship is given special treatment in Marx for his historicism throws into prominence the problem of in what way ideology and other elements in the so-called 'superstructure of society' are to be considered in the light of Marx's attempt to retain the individual's moral status. Any investigation into this problem must consider in what way the intellectual activities of men are the products of economic environmental factors and to what extent

they are constructive and vital factors in history. The latter question is dealt with in the Marxian doctrine of philosophy as a weapon. The importance of this doctrine for our study of Marx's individualism is clear, for individualism is meaningless if individual ideas and philosophy are irrelevant to the course of historical events.

We have noted earlier the emphasis which Marx lays upon the relative independence of intellectual and political aspects. They are not mere reflections of economic relationships. They are not, that is to say, mere epiphenomena.

We have noted on the other hand, his emphasis on the derived nature of these forms of consciousness. 'Ideology', says Engels in a letter to Mehring, 'is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously indeed but with a false consciousness. The real motives impelling him are unknown to him, otherwise it would not be an ideological process at all' The ideologist, that is, remains in the "realm of pure thought" never realising the inter-relation of thought and material reality or the dependence of his thought upon prevailing relationships. These relationships are, put simply, "the methods by which human beings in a given society produce their means of subsistence" (Engels to Starkenburg).

But to deny this independence is not to deny either the right to evaluation on a scale of truth nor to deny the effect of ideology upon historical development.

In his "Theses on Feuerbach" Marx emphasises that "He (Feuer-

bach) does not grasp the significance of 'revolutionary', of practical-critical, activity". And he points to the old mechanical materialist doctrine that men are the products of circumstances as a partial truth, it being necessary to supplement it with the statement that circumstances are changed by men and that this change requires that "the educator (i.e. the reformer) must himself be educated.

Human individuals are active in history, not passive. Practical activity is not blind activity, it requires direction, guidance, theory. "Theory is not abstract, contemplative, it must be practical, active."

"The philosophers", he says, "have interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it".

Philosophy is, for Marx, a weapon, in the sense that through understanding we can bring about changes. By resolving intellectual contradictions we can discover how to resolve them in the real world, in social life.

This doctrine is important; it involves not only the problem of knowledge but also the whole of Marxian theory of mind. Marx here stands, as we have seen, clearly for the unity of mind and body, against the dualism of Descartes and others. He attacks Feuerbach for his artificial separation of mind and the objects of thought. He postulate the active rôle of mind in knowing. This doctrine is so vital that we ^{have found} find it necessary to recapitulate briefly certain ideas dealt with in Chapter I.

Transferring these doctrines into the wider field of social action Marx develops the theory of the close relationship between

knowing and doing. Human beings, that is, react upon their environment, they stand above it, in a certain sense, and yet they are bound to attempt to affect it, to modify its course of development. The activity of the mind in the activity of judging - which as idealism has emphasised^h is not a passive, reflective one but a positive, creative, intelligent one - is transferred into another realm.

Ideology - philosophy, economics, political theories, legal doctrines, religions - arise in answer to definite human needs. These needs are various but include the need to organise socially, the need for spiritual satisfaction and peace, the need to understand how society works, the need to satisfy further^{material} needs and desires. It is the development of these needs and desires which is the dynamic of history. From these needs and desires arises theoretical activity.

The needs of men are here seen as basic, but man having once begun to theorize sets out upon a dual process. First, he must answer the need for greater coherence and completeness and truth in the theories he has begun to formulate. Secondly, he has to apply these theories to the world both in order to test them, and to attain a mastery over natural processes. These processes supplement each other. Theory, the result of needs, is applied in answering further needs and in supplying new needs to be answered. Thus, philosophies arise to fulfil a social need - usually a justification of prevailing ways of life are needed and philosophy (including religion) arises to answer the question: How are we (or I) justified?

This does not mean, however, that philosophy is a mere reflection, and justification of, prevailing relationships. It may be so and in many cases it has been. Equally, in many cases it has led to the conclusion that circumstances are unjust, evil; that human beings should change their environment. Theoretical activity reflects prevailing conditions, reflects the objective historical situation only in the sense that it answers definite prevailing needs, its problems are current problems and, moreover, its work is limited by the general state of knowledge at the time.

Certain theories, against which Marx protested, held that ideas are mere impressions on the mind produced by the impact of material bodies and, similarly, that philosophic theories were merely analytical not constructive or leading to action. For Marx, however, theory was a guide to action. Theory has to base itself upon existing social needs and demands and upon the existing social situation. Thus theory must imply change.

Theory is a guide to action, and practice the living test of theory.(32) Practice is not mere practicability but involves a dynamic inter-relation of man's will and skill with theory. Knowledge, through practice, becomes, as it must, power. We desire knowledge for the sake of the power it gives us, not merely in the narrow sense, of domination over physical nature, but equally in the intellectual mastery over problems which each stage of knowledge gives us.

(32) Marx was not a pragmatist. His position in this matter may be put as follows: "In practice man must prove truth i.e. the reality and power, the 'this-sidedness' of his thinking". i.e. What works will be true, the inherent contradictions of the false will lead to practical ineffectiveness.

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We cannot divert here to study the implications of this position for a theory of truth. But it is important to note Marx's rejection of materialist doctrines of truth which may be said to hold that ideas must correspond to reality of which ideas are copies, impressions or reflections and of the materialist theory that all human history and activity were merely manifestations of physical mathematical laws, completely determined by mechanical or chemical processes. These doctrines were rejected for the same reason - they omitted the redirective, as opposed to the merely reflexive, the active, as opposed to the merely passive, the creative, as opposed to the negative, aspects of mind. To omit these aspects was to omit the essential point that theory was a guide to changing the world to making it true. That the individual is not a mere cog in a vast machine but a being whose will, through society, can and must become effective in changing that society, is essential to Marx's doctrine.

Marxism, therefore, is not ordinary materialism for it postulates a revolutionary programme of action and this programme is based upon a plan, and involves the notion of planning for the future as an important aspect of the sort of society at which it is aiming. Nor ordinary materialism can, without self-contradiction, hold such a point of view.

This aspect of Marxism involves us in a form of teleology - a teleology of ends. We find Marx here in agreement with many other thinkers who have held that such a teleology of ends is the very basis of moral or political activity. The causal process becomes sub-ordinated to the 'higher' determinism, and becomes

the means of achieving the end postulated. Human ideals, aims or ends are, therefore, in Marx endowed with a practical force.

The rôle of the individual in this matter will be dealt with at greater length later, but we may comment here upon Marx's critique, in the light of the above principles, of Utopian socialism.

Utopian socialism never appreciated the fact that ideals, aims, ends, and the theories which go with them, are 'outgrowths' (not products) of prevailing conditions. It failed to see its schemes, plans, ideals as answers to historically conditioned demands. (see below 'Consciousness as social phenomenon'). It tends, as with F~~e~~rbach, "to abstract from the process of history and establish the religious⁽³³⁾ temperament as something independent, and to postulate an abstract - isolated - human individual"⁽³⁴⁾. It tends, that is, to divide society into the conditioned, determined herd and the isolated, theoretically conscious individuals whose ideals, aims and theories are independent of the mode of life of the era, of the social demands and needs of the period.

The individual theorist cannot be seen in this light; he must be seen in terms of his epoch. He must be seen both as its product and as its modifier. Just as in the individual, sensations and intellect and the active body are related, so in society there is an inter-action and relation between the needs etc. of society impressing themselves upon the mind of the individual

(33) Philosophic, theoretical - not religious in the narrow sense.

(34) Marx, Theses on F~~e~~rbach. No. 6.

and his theories and actions, through society, according to his theories.

Philosophy in its earlier forms, however, has never been consciously revolutionary - or revolutionary at all - because it has never been conscious of the interdependence of theory and practice, between intellect and passion. It has held the view that thoughts are not active, but confined to the sphere of thought. As Fe~~l~~erbach says: "Reason unites history but passion makes it. Everything new therefore is an injustice against the old....(but) ... one can think without doing an injustice to anyone, without inflicting pain on anyone, for thoughts do not go further than one's own head. But one cannot act without setting one's whole body in motion, without running up against obstacles on all sides, without pounding even against one's will".(35)

Hook comments: "Marx rejects the disjunction as being neither exhaustive nor exclusive. It is true that there is no action without a violation of some right or interest. It is not true that such action need be blind, uninformed by theory or reason. It is tru that one can think without acting directly but it is not true that no injustice is thereby done. For existing injustices are tolerated and remain unaltered. Philosophical activity may be conceived as action on behalf of values and interests which have been criticised by knowledge and reason. The very fact that philosophy is an activity in a world of space and time and incompatible interests, makes it clear that its goals cannot be absolute truth or absolute justice. But the fact that action is thoughtful

CHAPTER III

The Individual in Society

Marxism is at bottom a theory of human freedom and is concerned primarily with the establishment of an order of society in which this freedom will be attained. Marxism is, consequently, presented with the necessity of resolving the antagonism between the freedom of the individual, on the one hand, and the cohesion and domination of the state, on the other. It is forced to demonstrate the possibility of maintaining that self-identity and moral importance of the individual which, as we have seen, he asserts capitalism to have crushed. The dominant theme in Marx's social theory, then, is the individual in his relation to his fellows as they and he are united by social bonds. To study this relationship adequately we must first undertake an investigation into the Marxism theory of the nature of human consciousness, for this will throw light upon the underlying premises of the theory of the individual.

In his analysis Marx states the premises from which he starts "are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstractions can only be made in the imagination. They are real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity"(37) And Marx asserts that men are really distinguished from animals by the fact that

(37) K. Marx and F. Engels : "German Ideology" p. 6 - 7.

they produce their means of subsistence and in doing so produce their actual material life. This production is "a definite form of activity of ... individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part"; it is not "simply the reproduction of the physical existence of the individuals", on the contrary, it is an expression of their life and of what they are. What individuals are depends upon and coincides with what they produce and how they produce it. "The nature of individuals thus depends upon the material conditions determining their production" and this production presupposes not only increased population but, more important, "the intercourse of individuals with one another"(38).

Marx stands then in opposition to those theories(39) which take for granted the domination of religion by regarding political, jur- cal and moral consciousness as religious phenomena, i.e. purely spiritual. He repudiates the belief in the "rule of religion, of concepts, of an abstract general principle in the existing world". Such beliefs seem to Marx to be the substitution for the real world of phrases and to be a making of real relationships dependent upon consciousness.

With equal intensity Marx rejects the Hegelian approach to historical development. History for Hegel is the process of working out or unfolding of a rational principle. Hegel's method is historical "but he never forgets that the development which he sets

(38) K. Marx and F. Engels : Ibid p. 7-8

(39) For example those of the young Hegelians, Strauss, Stirner, Feuerbach, Bauer.

out to trace is the development not of events or of institutions, but of the speculative idea"(40). "History is the process of the self-realisation of the Absolute Idea"(41).

Marx rejects this concept as inadequate for it isolates the process of history from the real development of and change within institutions and promotes it into something more than it is viz. into a reality above men and things. "History does nothing" says Marx(42), "it 'possesses no colossal riches'; 'it fights not a fight'. It is rather real living man who acts; possesses and fights in everything. It is by no means 'History' which uses man as a means to carry out its ends, as if it were a person apart; rather History is nothing but the activity of man in pursuit of his ends". Thus Marx attacks the Hegelian deification of history.

History can only be understood through an understanding of the organization of individuals and their relation to the rest of nature. Nature and men are in constant inter-action; history is the product of that inter-action; the status of the individual depends upon the form which that inter-action takes. The individual can only be understood as a historical being, i.e. as a being who makes history and who lives within it.

The individual qua historical is the individual qua social for it is in and through human intercourse that he makes history and is affected by history. Our problem, therefore, is to determine whether Marxism postulates the social nature of man.

(40) Vaughan ; "History of Political Philosophy" p. 150.

(41) G.D.H. Cole : "Some relations between economic and political theory" p. 29

(42) K. Marx "Hegelian Philosophy of Right" Quoted by O. Rühle (Karl Marx) p. 43.

Consciousness as social phenomenon

To determine this we must investigate the Marxian view of the nature of human consciousness. It is as conscious beings that we are related to our fellows. If Marxism holds man's nature to be basically social and the individual to be in a harmonious relationship with society, it must root these doctrines securely in a theory of consciousness. As isolated within myself I can have no need for my fellows nor can I attain cooperation with them; as sharing a common consciousness I am inter-dependent with others. Cooperation becomes possible. To this problem we must now turn.

"Human life is the real community of men"(43) and in their human activities men enter into social-economic, political, legal-relationships with each other in order to produce and to satisfy their needs. The origin, therefore, of social life lies historically in the material necessities of human individuals. No contradiction is involved here with the Aristotelian concept that the state is logically prior to the family and to the individual. Marx's account is deliberately historical and ^{in this} it bears a close similarity to the accounts in both Aristotle and Plato of the growth of the state or city(44).

The establishment of these relationships is at the same time the production of a form - or forms - of consciousness or ideas. For, urges Marx, "consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life

(43) K. Marx : "Social Reform" Reprinted Stenning Selected Essays.

(44) cf. Plato : "Republic" Bk. II and Aristotle "Politics" Bk. I

process"(45). Moreover, it is equally vital to Marxism that we must never forget that forms of consciousness are interwoven with or burdened by 'material' relationships, i.e. with life as a whole(46). Consciousness is not independent, for "life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life ... the starting point is the real living individuals themselves, as they are in actual life, and consciousness is considered solely as their consciousness"(47). For Marx abandonment of empty talk about abstract consciousness is the essential prerequisite of real knowledge.

As we have already pointed out Plato as well as Marx treats the growth of society historically. "The origin of a city is due to the fact that no one of us is sufficient for himself but each is in need of many things Then men, being in want of many things, gather into one settlement many partners and helpers, one taking to himself one man, and another another, to satisfy their diverse needs, and to this common settlement we give the name of city. "The city, then, is the outcome of mutual needs". But the first and greatest need is the provision of food to support existence and life, the second the provision of a dwelling place and the third of clothing and so on"(48).

Plato continues by tracing the growth of the division of labour in the growing city. And, as he enumerates needs, so he enu-

(45) German Ideology p. 14

(46) By 'material' Marx does not mean that the relationships are material but that they are directed to bodily, economic, ends.

(47) German Ideology p. 15

(48) Plato "Republic" Everyman Ed. p. 48

merates the various classes required to answer them. So society grows.

The similarity with the Marxian account is notable for Marx, like Plato, holds that society has its origin in the mutual efforts of individuals to satisfy their needs. Social institutions depend upon the fact that the first historical act - viz. the production of material life itself - is never completed. Marx recognises with Plato, that the family, the division of labour and the whole structure of communal life depends upon the fact that "no one of us is sufficient for himself." Human relationships are, then, social relationships.

Marx gives an important definition of 'social relationships': "By social we understand the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end". Bearing this definition in mind we shall now examine in more detail the Marxian view of human consciousness.

Firstly, Marx emphasizes that consciousness is never 'pure' but always "burdened with matter" which makes its appearance, in the first instance "in the form of agitated layers of air, sounds, in short, language". The study of consciousness cannot be separated from the study of language. Language, he says, in practical consciousness expresses the social potentialities and end of man. It expresses the interdependence of individuals, their need for a common understanding arising from their common needs. Furthermore it expresses their ability to attain mutual understanding, for what, historically, men have done implies their ability to do. And the next implication is that to be able to reach

common understanding, mutual aid means the possession among men of a common reason, a sharing in mind.

Language and consciousness arise in answer to the need for intercourse among men. The existence of relationships implies a consciousness. Relations must exist "for me"; their existence is not purely objective because there must be a consciousness of relation for them to be effective. Animals have no consciousness hence they have not relations. "For the animal", says Marx, "a relation does not exist as a relation. Consciousness" he goes on, "is therefore from the very beginning a social product and remains so as long as men exist at all". Consciousness has a history, it is at first a sensuous realisation of the immediate environment of things and persons. It is a consciousness of nature; not, however, of nature as subservient or friendly but of nature as alien, as "an all-powerful and unassailable force, with which men's relations are purely animal and by which they are overawed like beasts....."(49).

We have quoted at length in order to emphasise Marx's doctrine that consciousness, as well as society, has a history and that, from a primitive and semi-animal consciousness it develops towards an understanding of an domination over nature and into a coherent sense of social relationships and obligations. It is in this process that ideology, morality, law and religion emerge.

Consciousness matures and grows as the division of labour spreads, for the division of labour increases the interdependence for men upon men, and increases also their common interests. The division of labour implies not merely an allocation among men of (49) German Ideology.

different but qualitatively similar occupations and duties, but also the separation of material or physical and mental labour. With this latter division there arises in consciousness itself the "consciousness conscious of itself"; the idea that consciousness and ideas and, indeed, all thinking is independent and 'pure'. Consciousness is not seen as related to and dependent upon physical life but as a thing-in-itself, the contents of which are not derived from natural or material necessity. Thus, says Marx, are created " 'Pure', theory, theology, philosophy, ethics, etc." No matter how emancipated this theory appears from the 'material' world, it conflicts with that world whenever contradictions arise in the sphere of social relationships.

These social contradictions are the outcome of developments in "forces" of a productive system which have not been followed by a parallel and necessary adjustment in what Marx calls the "social relations of production". Such contradictions within society are rooted in the division of labour and the clash of interests between individuals.

Marxism, is fundamentally, a historical philosophy and Marx bases his interpretation of man and society upon premises which postulates their essential unity. He repudiated that outlook which derived its doctrines from something called the "essence of man" as something beyond society, as the embodiment of which each isolated individual existed. Such a doctrine seemed to Marx an unreal abstraction from the process of history and the postulation and glorification of "an abstract and isolated human individual" (50).
(50) cf. Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach" 6 and 7.

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(50) cf. Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach" 6 and 7.

Furthermore, this approach seems to make the human essence meaningless by reducing it to a generality "which naturally unites the many individuals". The individual cannot be thus reduced to a permanent and unchanging collection of qualities, for the individual and society are related not in a static existence but in a dynamic, changing movement.

Marx insists that we study the phenomenon of consciousness as exemplifying the social nature of man. Much light may be thrown upon this doctrine by a comparison, to which we shall shortly turn, with the Idealist account of the phenomenon of consciousness.

Marx and Idealism

We have seen that for Marx the mutual dependence of man upon man - the common needs of men and their co-operation in satisfying these needs - is the historical presupposition for the development of consciousness and language. Marx is, therefore, taking a view which was not possible for the earlier materialists. On their premises and in terms of their method, individuals were atomistically isolated. Marx stands opposed not only to the shattering and disastrous dualism of Descartes but also to the cult of individualism which developed with this dualism(51).

In Marx's theory of cognition, knowledge and consciousness we

(51) See Chapter II, above.

are not placed in the ego-centric position of thinkers for whom the primary question for philosophy or religion is the nature of the self and its knowledge and justification. We are not asked by Marx to answer as the sole important question in ethics: "How am I justified?" or in epistemology: "How do I know?" for Marx there is no "I" apart from "You".

The very concepts cannot be separated or isolated from each other, for they involve each other. The dialectical position of the inter-dependence of opposites is here well illustrated. The very act of separation of the ideas 'I' and 'You' involves the notion that they cannot be separated⁽⁵²⁾. But such apparently abstract logical observations must not lead to a forgetting of their ground in the totality of common needs and productive effort - in short, in common experience. The social "world" of production and material necessity is temporally prior to the conscious recognition of social interdependence. Nor may we reduce this basic interdependence to biology - reproduction and production - for the totality of social relationships is more than these; it is a totality or a whole of material and ideal relationships - a community of action, co-operation and conflict. And it is from such common, joint action that social consciousness ~~is~~ in individual minds grows, and it is by the possibility for such joint activity that the social nature of man is proved.

The very idea of the intelligibility of things and other men

(52) "Since he comes into the world with a looking glass in his hand man first sees and recognises himself in other men. Peter only establishes his own identity by comparing himself with Paul as a being of a like kind. And thereby Paul, just as he stands in his Pauline

presupposes common action in a world which we hold in common. This was a truth unknown to the early materialists⁽⁵³⁾ and sensationists⁽⁵⁴⁾, for they postulated isolated individuals receiving separately distinct "impressions". The concept of 'impressions received' as constituting knowledge makes human consciousness passive; it becomes a consciousness of individual pleasure or pain, gain or loss. A passive individualism in epistemology becomes in the field of social action the doctrine of hedonistic self-interest; whereas with Marx the social foundations of consciousness become an assertion of the active rôle of men in both the gaining and the application of knowledge.

These Marxist principles may be integrated with the Idealist tradition, as we remarked above, and this integration and comparison is of value to our problem in that it illustrates the persistently maintained idealism of Marxian "dialectical materialism" and the roots of Marx's theory of the individual. For the purposes of our analysis we might study any of the recent Idealist thinkers - Bradley, Bosanquet, Collingwood etc. Let us for the moment concentrate on F.H. Bradley.

Bradley in an essay⁽⁵⁵⁾ on political morality poses the point of view that to hold that the state is prior to the individual and that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts is an illusion

personality, becomes to Peter the type of the genus homo" (K. Marx, Capital I, 6. Quoted S. Hook : "Towards the understanding of Karl Marx").

(53) For example Hobbes.

(54) Locke, ~~Hume~~.

(55) F.H. Bradley : "My Station and its Duties" Chapter V, "Ethical Studies", Oxford University Press.

that "has been traced to its source and dispelled exploded". The family, society, the state and generally every community of men, this 'refutation' goes on, is real only in its individual members, for only they have real existence. They are the products of individuals' activity and they persist only because individuals continue to stand in certain relations to each other. These individuals make these relations, and, although they are real in them, this does not mean that they are real because of them or that they would not be real out of them. This point of view holds, in short, that a community "is the sum of its parts, is made by the addition of parts; and that the parts are as real before the addition as after; the relations they stand in are accidental, not essential to their being"; that is, individuals are the facts of social phenomena and societies are collections of such individuals held together by "force, illusion or contract".

Bradley proceeds to attack this doctrine holding that such individuals as the theory postulates do not in fact exist and that individuals are what they are by virtue of their status in a community, by virtue, indeed, of the very existence of a community. Communities are not mere names but they are real and a real unity, something more than the aggregate of their members. If we remove from a man his background, his tradition, his education, his customs, his habits, his socially formed and moulded characteristics the residuum is something that never existed nor ever can. The very essence of the individual is destroyed if "we suppose the world of relations into which men are born never to have existed". The

isolated individual is a fiction; for the 'individual' who does not possess as a part of him relations with others and the potentiality for these relations, who does not attain self-realisation and self-understanding can not be. "Man", says Bradley, "was never anything but social, and society was never made by individual man; the 'individual' apart from the community is an abstraction".

Bradley's formula, that man is social and that his consciousness is socially conditioned⁽⁵⁶⁾, does not, however, solve all the problems that arise in this connection. Its general principle has still to overcome the existence within society itself of those contradictions and divisions which Marx sought to analyse and relate to the life and future of the individual.

Later work by philosophers of the Idealist school present a more detailed and complete approach to the problem⁽⁵⁷⁾.

It is agreed that there exist within society elements hostile to true social life. Society it is correctly affirmed is in a state of tension between the tendencies to social integration on the one hand and tendencies inimical to the formation of a complete society as opposed to a mere community.

Through speech, it is agreed, man 'liberates himself' from blind acceptance of and domination by desires, passions and instincts

(56) "When he (the individual) can separate himself from (the) world and know himself apart from it, then by that time his self, the object of his self-consciousness, is penetrated, infected, characterized by the existence of others. Its content implies every fibre of the community." F.H. Bradley Eth. St. p. 172.

(57) R.G. Collingwood's "New Leviathan" illustrates the modern Idealist approach to the problem.

and equally from fear of and subjection to blind natural forces. Essentially, the first step in such liberation is the naming of or the defining and recognising of that which must be controlled. This process of naming is the process of attaining intellectual maturity. Naming is bringing something into consciousness; it is the very basis of thinking. And language is the prerequisite of thought and, hence, of knowledge. Language, therefore, is the expression of consciousness. It is, in its simplest form, the mere register of feelings; as such it is wild, unorganised. As consciousness becomes coherent, language develops.

Just as passions have as their object something not of the self which possesses the passion, so elementary social consciousness of which language is the expression, rests upon the distinction between the 'self' and the 'not-self'; 'my will' is a correlative idea to the 'idea of another's will'. "No man has an idea of himself as a free agent, without an idea of free agents other than himself and of social relations between them"(58). A joint or social activity implies a social consciousness, language, as the expression of that consciousness, is the expression of the human urge to fulfilment in society.

Since a true society can only be based upon relations between free men - and hence is not a mere 'collection' - it implies a sufficient measure of equality to promote the execution of joint purposes. Society rests upon the existence, it is held, of a joint will; that community is not social in which no joint will exists and

(58) R.G. Collingwood : *New Leviathan* Chap XXI

and in which joint action is the result not of mutual decision but of force. Thus there exist, not as mutually exclusive entities 'societies' and what have been termed 'non-social communities'. The former are free, based upon a social will; the latter are mere collections held together by force. They co-exist within the same communities.

This analysis is close to that of Marx for it recognises both the non-coherence of existing society and it goes on to hold that the existing contradictions (the class roots of which it fails to recognise) may be removed.

It is basic to the Idealist argument that a society should be "self-ruling". All its decisions and rules should be the spontaneous decision of the social whole; they should not be the imposed decisions of a group. Every existing society contains elements of the non-social community; i.e. it is ruled both by force and imposed decision and by free joint social will.

Society does not exist statically, for both Marx and the Idealists society is not; it is 'becoming'. For the Idealists the process in society is that of the absorption of the non-social community into the social - i.e. the bringing into the community of the intellectually mature (the social community), those who are ^{im-}intellectually mature and who are dependent upon and hence ruled by the intellectually mature (59).

Thus for Idealism, whilst every society involves the idea of

(59) The 'intellectually mature' society is based upon the idea of the 'we' not merely abstractly but concretely - 'we' decide to act. The 'intellectually immature' have no deep consciousness of the 'we'.

a universal social community - i.e. the elimination of non-social elements within society - every existing society is but partially social, hence self-contradictory both in its internal and external aspects. It is, that is, ^{by} _A divided internally into social and non-social communities and externally it is self-contradictory because it is a particular and not a universal society. And the idea of society is bound up with the idea of universality. Society, for the Idealists, involves an all-embracing integration with universal reason; the individual becomes a whole within that "moral organism" of the universal society(60).

Fundamentally, Marx associates himself with these principles but his theory involves certain differences which it has been our purpose to bring out in this comparison of Marxism and Idealism. We have seen that for Idealism the society in which the individual lives is an expression of his social nature. But Idealism has shown, too, that this society is neither static nor truly social. Marx develops these views. He analyses the nature of the non-social elements and tendencies in society and he clarifies the individual's relation to them.

For Marx the individual could not be seen apart from society; his consciousness is a social consciousness. But it is social because the individual is a particular relationship to society and his consciousness is not, as we have seen, 'pure' or independent of conditions of existence.

(60) The phrase is Bradley's cf. *Eth. Studies* op cit Ch. V

"It is not mens' consciousness which determines their existence; on the contrary it is their social existence that determines their consciousness(61)". Marx holds that the degree to which free will is operative in society - i.e. the degree of truly social consciousness - and the content of that consciousness are dependent upon the social relationships of the individual. These relationships are independent of mens' will. They constitute the economic structure or system under which they live, into which, very largely, they are born. It is in the clashes and contradictions within this system of relationships that we find the source of the development of consciousness and the origin of the movement of society.

The development of social consciousness may be traced in this movement in the 'material' conditions of society(62). It is a process of the elimination of contradictions both in the human consciousness and in the community itself. This consciousness whilst it is not blindly determined by economic developments, it is relatively independent, reacting upon society. It is, for Marx, conditioned and limited.

We have reached the position, then, that the individual is possessed by nature of a consciousness socially conditioned and moulded and is, therefore, potentially a member of a truly social (i.e. integrated, non-contradictory) community. He is not a member of

(61) K.Marx : Introduction to "Critique of Political Economy".

(62) The development of the social consciousness in Marx corresponds to the concept of becoming social in the Idealists.

such a community, however, by virtue of the fact that all existing communities are torn by conflicts. The individual is caught in a maze of contradictions - between individual interest and 'the general good', between class advantage and rival class pressure, between stability and social progress, between rich and poor - which make his social consciousness a class consciousness and his role in the socialising of human consciousness a revolutionary one. We must, therefore, examine the problem of social contradictions as they affect the individual.

Individual and social contradictions.

The main presupposition for Marx in any study of what he termed the 'pre-historic stage of human history⁽⁶³⁾', is the fact of the property relations based upon the division of labour within 'civil society'⁽⁶⁴⁾.

The processes of bourgeois civil society conflict with the very nature of social consciousness. A society and a social consciousness involves, as we have seen, a social will, a common social reason and, hence, a joint purpose. The individual becomes a social being when his interests and purposes are those of society as a whole. The individual's purposes must be coherent and consistent with those of society. Yet this does not occur in bourgeois society. Man, as Marx pointed out in his Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right⁽⁶⁵⁾, is not an abstract being beyond

(63) By this Marx means the history of all class societies, i.e. all history to date.

(64) 'Civil society' : "The true hearth and theatre of all history

the world, outside of contact with its problems. Man must be seen in his true context in "the world of men", i.e. in the state or society. But the world view, the outlook, which current society and the State promotes are distorted and perverted precisely because the state and society are perverted and self-destructive.

Society is divided into classes, each having its own particular interests over and against the interests of society as a whole. Each successive society - feudal, bourgeois, proletarian - imagines that it and its predominant ideology represent the culmination of social progress and thought. Each imagine that the interests of the particular ruling class represent the general interest of all society and of all classes. But this is not the case, for classes stand in the relation of oppressed and oppressors. The existence of an oppressed class is fundamental to all class society(66). Each class-society contains within it this clash of interest and in its rise to power each new ruling class brings into existence a class with whose interests it is in conflict. Even if each member of a ruling class is united with every other in support of class interests, each is by virtue of that fact united with every other

is not the political world but civil society. The phrase originated in the 18th century. Civil society has the family with its developments and external relations as basis. It begins to have a regular development with the rise of the bourgeoisie which is, in the 18th century the potential, in the 19th century the actual, ruling class. Civil society is the social organisation which evolves directly out of production and commerce, and forms the basis of the state and all other idealistic superstructure". L.P. Adams "Karl Marx in his earlier writings".

(65) Quoted O. Ruhle's "Karl Marx".

(66)K. Marx, "The Poverty of Philosophy" p. 189.

in conflict with the antagonistic, conflicting interests of the class they oppress. "This opposition of interests flows from the economic conditions of bourgeois life"(67).

But the mere division of interests between classes is not the sole contradiction within society. The individual, in his rôle as class member, is involved in clashes of interests and purposes with other individuals or groups of individuals. Daily, says Marx, it becomes clear that bourgeois relations of production are not simple in character but dual(68). Marx means that not only do these relations produce wealth, they also produce poverty.

Within the bourgeois world, then, we find the division of individuals on the basis of their particular interests. This conflict manifests itself in the phenomenon of competition. This competition between men - "free competition" - is the sole regulative authority in bourgeois society. Competition involves a mutual hostility of interests among members of the bourgeoisie itself(69).

These contradictions within society are inimical to the production of social cohesion and a consciousness of the interests and true nature of society. They produce breakdowns in the smooth functioning of the material production in society. This involves the necessity of changing social relations. A revolutionary situation is created. The rule of the bourgeoisie instead of promoting

(67) K. Marx : Ibid p. 133-4

(68) K. Marx : Ibid p. 139

(69) "The bourgeoisie finds itself involved in constant battle ...with those portions of the bourgeoisie itself, whose interests have become antagonistic to the progress of industry" : K. Marx and F. Engels "Communist Manifesto" p. 215 Selected Works of K. Marx.

easy change in society pauperizes the proletariat and so, because of its inability to rule, the bourgeoisie - which "cannot assure to its slaves a slave's existence"(70) - is and must be challenged and overthrown as a class.

Such a situation of revolutionary need and activity creates for the individual of whatever the class the necessity for the development of a class consciousness.

Class Consciousness

Class consciousness, as we shall see, is the sole form of social consciousness which it is possible for individuals to develop within class society. Its derivation and importance for our investigation must now be considered, for it is a class member that Marx analyses the individual in society and it is the abolition of the class characteristics at which he aims.

Commonly it is accepted that man becomes a thinking being as a result of social life and the pressure of social needs. Marx's position is that reason is the outcome of practical necessity and his doctrine, again, is largely that of the Idealist school - with the difference that Marx relates the 'practical' sources of reason to the class structure of society(71).

We, as human, think rationally primarily as a result of practical needs - to facilitate doing and to explain one actions to ourselves. Thus reason is first concerned with the ego and its acti-

(70) Ibid p. 218

(71) cf. E.G. Collingwood "New Leviathan" Chap. 18

vities. As reason begins to consider questions about other things it becomes "theoretical". But, as Marx also points out, such theoretical thinking is never purely theoretical. It has its roots in needs, in practice or in practical problems concerning relations with others. Further, even theoretical thinking must be tested by and derived from practical activities. All thinking - no matter how 'theoretical' - is rooted in practical problems. Alternatively we might express the same idea, as Marx did, by seeing theoretical thinking as derivative from the material productive activity of human society. "Real thinking," says R. G. Collingwood, "is always to some extent experimental in its methods; it always starts from practice and returns to practice; for it is based upon 'interest' in the thing thought about; that is on a practical concern with it"(72).

Furthermore, it is fundamental to Marxism that man derives his consciousness - i.e. his theoretical reflective activities - from his practical social activity^{and} his work. The problems with which man is faced are practical; they cannot be solved passively. Man, for Marx, is a being who creates his world. He builds this world through his work and in doing so, he builds his consciousness and determines its contents and form. Marx's consciousness and his theoretical thinking is determined by his work as a member of a class within a society.

Thus, the consciousness of each individual depends upon the practical problems - the interests - of each individual. Every man

(72) R. G. Collingwood op cit.

and every class of men will have a different theoretical attitude according to the different practical problems with which he or they are faced.

Marx develops this doctrine by pointing out that certain predominating interests based upon property relations and resulting power distribution are the source of political - and, indeed, all theoretical - thinking. The consciousness of any given period is derived from class-interests and predominant material individual interests.

Class-consciousness is, therefore, not merely the recognition of social life from a partial aspect; it is the whole range of theoretical (ideological, religious, economic and philosophical) attitudes prevailing among certain groups of people at certain periods. Marx holds with others that such attitudes are social products. It is the consciousness of 'we' (a class group), not that of 'I' or 'we' (as a social whole). It is a recognition of group needs and purposes. Social consciousness is not, therefore, 'pure' consciousness, it is burdened with 'practice' or with 'matter'.

For Marx this means that in every epoch there are certain predominating doctrines, "ruling ideas". These ideas are those held and propagated by the ruling class, that class which has at its disposal the means of material production. These ideas are "nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas (73)". And the ruling class' influence dominates not only material relation-

(73) K. Marx and F. Engels : "German Ideology" p. 39

ships but equally the ideological life of an epoch.

The division of labour takes on a new form. The production of ideas becomes a special vocation. Mental and material labour, thinkers and those receptive to ideas - these are the new dichotomies of class society.

We must note, however, two important qualifications of this doctrine.

1) Class-consciousness, in the form of class-ideologies, is not self-conscious as class-consciousness. Such class-consciousness, Marx claims, is to be found as such only in the revolutionary proletariat when it recognises itself as apart from the rest of society and yet as the class whose interests ultimately coincide with those of society as a whole. All other class-ideology imagines itself to be representative of general interest and as the expression of society as a whole.

2) Ideas are not considered by Marx to be mere epiphenomena. They are the products of individuals' minds which are derived from, concerned with and limited by, prevailing material conditions. Marx is concerned primarily to discredit the doctrine that history is the unfolding of the Idea. He is not concerned to discredit the role of the individual in history nor to deny the effect of ideology upon historical development.

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lead and create opinion, he can mould consciousness . His ideas, however, are never so far divorced from current problems or prevailing doctrines. He cannot dominate society or his class, save as a spokesman of his class. On the other hand he does not merely reflect events, he reflects upon them. He does not merely justify, he influences and is influenced by social conditions. He is, in short, conditioned not determined; limited in his freedom, not chained to events. Class interests dominate individuals, but they can, as ideologists, recognise their limiting effects and they can partially liberate themselves and become more truly social by associating themselves, as individuals, with other more progressive classes. Individuals, however, can never liberate themselves from the fact and domination of class-division.

The effects of these divisions upon individuals have been summed up by Marx as follows:

"Individuals have always built on themselves, but naturally on themselves within their given historical conditions and relationships, not on the 'pure' individuals in the sense of ideologists. But, in the course of historical evolution and precisely through the inevitable fact that within the division of labour social relationships take on an independent existence, there appears a division within the life of each individual in so far as it is personal and in so far as it is determined by some branch of labour and conditions pertaining to it".

Not that man is merely his social function; rather their personalities are conditioned and determined by class relationships and, therefore, they suffer from the divisions in and between classes in

their personal and private lives as individuals. The life of an individual in the bourgeoisie, is moreover, threatened by that division between the personal and class individual produced by the doctrine and practise of competition. This division is peculiar to the dynamic and moving bourgeois society rather than to the static hierarchical society of the medieval era. Under bourgeois 'civil society', society becomes based upon "a war of all against all".

The individual proletarian is compelled, as a result of this fact, to develop his potentialities as a proletarian, i.e. to become revolutionary and assert himself as an individual - i.e. as a being whose primary desire is to become part of a larger social whole - and as a proletarian - i.e. as a class individual.

We have seen then that a) the individual in class society is primarily social but his social nature expresses itself only partially as class-consciousness and in class loyalties and behaviour;

b) This class character is the result of the contradictions within society which the individual reflects in the contradictions in his own nature - as person and as class individual.

c) Although as thinkers individuals may affect class actions or repudiate class allegiance they cannot divorce themselves from class division. They must represent some class - i.e. limited - point of view, since under class society no general, all-embracing view point is possible.

d) Only by association with the prole-

tariat which, by promoting its class interests, promotes general human welfare by struggling for a reorganisation of human society and the removal of social contradictions, can the individual promote his own true social nature and that of his fellows;

e) Marxism holds, therefore, a theory of the nature and source of consciousness and human nature and of the individual in relation to these which differs not at all fundamentally from Idealist doctrines. Both rest upon the universality of human reason and sociability. It is as revolutionary that Marxism differs from Idealism.

It is to this aspect of Marxism and its theory of the individual, that we must turn. We shall examine the nature of the social goal or ideal society purposed by Marx and we shall see how his analysis of the relation of individual to social contradictions provides the basis for his solution to the problem of uniting man and his fellows. We shall see, too, how Marx's unity of thought with Idealism's moral doctrine of the 'social organism' is maintained.

CHAPTER IV.

We have seen that Marxism holds it to be necessary for their self-realisation as socially integrated human beings, for members of the proletariat to act as a class to overthrow the existing class society. Only by doing so and in creating a new society can individualism truly become realized through the free collective life of men. We must examine, however, in greater detail the nature of Marx's social goal, particularly in the light of the charge that he is an exponent of "herd worship"(74).

In Marxian philosophy this social goal is the dialectical synthesis of the contradictions of class society. As in dialectical logic the synthesis is implicit in the nature of the clashing terms of the previous contradiction and so in Marxism the class-less society is implicit in the nature of bourgeois class-society. The rôle of the proletariat and of socially-conscious individuals is the explication of this implication. The class-less society is the teleological end determining human historical development.

For both individual and social morality, too, this form of social organisation is the dialectical synthesis of ethical problems and the form of society under which dialectical living becomes possible. In this, Marxism, follows the Idealism of a certain school(75). Marxism sees the communist society as one in (74) As R.G. Collingwood asserts in "New Leviathan" (Chap. XXXIII)

(75) Again, Collingwood, whose doctrine of the 'social community' as dialectical has been invaluable in elucidating certain trends in political thought.

which there are no fixed, unyielding conflicts. It is that way of life based upon the integration of the individual and the social whole through the operation of reason, rather than force, upon human affairs. This involves, further, that resources - human and natural - are used in a way beneficial to all members of society by society, that conflicts are reconciled by discussion and not force, and that political development is dynamically based upon free-will.

To be more specific, we shall briefly recapitulate what Marx urges should and will be abolished by the revolution. Fundamentally, Marxism is opposed to that "opposition between individual and general interest" which is rooted in the non-communist society which is dependent on the division of labour and which makes man "a slave to his deed, to the activity from which he cannot escape" (76).

Such a clash of interests finds its source in the dominance of the profit-motive in society, in the existence of private property in the means of production, distribution and exchange, and in the class rule (expressed through the state) of one group over others. Marxism urges, therefore, that private property, economic exploitation and the profit incentive, class-rule and the existence of classes, the State and the rule by force are the objectives against which the revolution is directed.

The communist society is based upon an attempt to satisfy human needs in a particular way. All human history, for Marxism,

is a process of answering needs through forms of social organization which in their turn produce new needs. In all earlier history the answering of needs has rested with particular classes, unsatisfactorily and without either flexibility in adapting themselves to expanded demands and without the necessary equality of treatment for all members of society. The class-less society is more stable and more able to answer existing and future human needs by virtue of the fact that it is a "self-ruling community", i.e. that form of community in which every individual is involved freely in the exercise of the corporate will and in which discussion is the basis of decision.

This community becomes possible when those contradictions inherent in class-society have been removed and the individual becomes through his needs and reason integrated with his fellows. Under communism, therefore, man attains his full status as man, because he has established collective control over all social institutions which influence his life. Humanity becomes socialised and men's individuality becomes modified and enriched rather than submerged and destroyed.

Socialism

The social goal, however, is not attained suddenly but it is the result of change and development. It is the end of a process. The "self-ruling community" is itself reached only through a period of self-controlled social development. It begins to exist when the proletariat overthrows the bourgeoisie by a revolutionary

- usually violent - act.

When this takes place there is established that form of society known as Socialism and defined, frequently, as the "Revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat". Essentially socialism is the stage in social development when the proletariat is the ruling class i.e. when the state is in the hands of that class which actually operates the means of production and who through their own revolutionary act now not only operate but also own and direct the operation of these means. Man as 'civil' and man as political become united. Man's economic life and man's political life become merged. Socialism, then, involves that the new proletariat state establishes a planned economy under which ownership and control of the means of production become vested in the state operated, temporarily (i.e. until the abolition or "withering away" of the state), in the interests of the working class.

This stage of historical development has been called by Marx "the dictatorship of the Proletariat". This phrase is extremely unclear and subject to varying interpretations. Although never defined clearly and never used frequently in Marx's writings the phrase has come important in that it has come to be used as a justification for a form of totalitarianism by a single party and a state bureaucracy. There exists a tendency, that is, to employ the phrase to justify a dictatorship over the proletariat in the name of the proletariat.

It is apparent, however, that the phrase cannot be employed to defend either single party totalitarianism or a dictatorship of

any kind. Marx regarded bourgeois democracy as non-democratic precisely because he held that essentially it was a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie who, by virtue of their ownership and control of the means of production - i.e. the real life of the people - were not responsible for their actions to the community as a whole. The political life of the community is, under bourgeois democracy, not one with the economic life, and it is the economic life which is basic.

Similarly, the called socialism "dictatorship of the proletariat" because it involved a new ruling class. This substitution of ruling classes was held necessary by Marx because he believed first, that it was the first and nearest approximation to a democratic state and second, that it was the first stage in the process, essential to true democracy, of abolition of the state as such.

The proletarian dictatorship was, that is, the first class dictatorship by the majority class in the community. It was, therefore, more democratic than previous minority dictatorships - bourgeois or feudal - but it was still a dictatorship because it involved or implied force.

The dictatorship of the proletariat involves the abolition not of democracy itself but of its peculiarly bourgeois form and the establishment of a state in which democracy attains the highest measure compatible with the existence of a state machine. "It involves the shattering of the former state power and its replacement by a new and really democratic state"(77). By this Engels means:

(77): F. Engels "Introduction to 'Civil War in France'".

1. Election to all posts - administrative, judicial and educational on the basis of universal suffrage, with the right to recall delegates at any time.

2. The erection, by the expedient of paying all officials wages equivalent to those of workers, of barriers against careerism and a bureaucratic ruling class.

In the fact that this plan - and its concomitant decentralisation of control - is an extreme form of democracy, we can see proof that Marx visualised the dictatorship of the proletariat as the transition stage to communism; as a transition which embodied to the maximum possible extent the democracy of the next stage and not one which, aiming at communism, sought to attain it through the establishment of a form of society the main characteristics of which were opposed to future democratic development.

Socialism represents the preliminary step towards the condition under which as Marx, in his essay on the Jewish Question, says "the real individual man is identical with the citizen, and has become a generic being⁽⁷⁸⁾ in his empirical life, in his individual work, in his individual relationships", for "not until man has recognised and organised his own capacities as social capacities, and consequently the social force is no longer divided by political power will human emancipation be achieved".

O. Ruhle comments : "Mankind will only be able to pursue its

(78) "Generic being" is an obscure phrase involving a theory of the nature of man which Marx never explicitly gives. To deal at length with it here would be, however, irrelevant to our theme. We merely note its difficulties.

emancipatory ascent successfully, when it becomes competent to make every individual willing and able to bring his subjective scheme of life into harmony with the objective evolutionary scheme of society - when the private individual is wholly merged in the member of the species. Only the objectively socialised and subjectively communalised human being will be able to effect the emancipation of mankind, thus becoming master of its own fate"(79).


The principles embodied in the passage are, in essentials, those which are already noted. There are, however, certain important differences in Ruhle's approach. He exaggerates the Marxian emphasis upon the communal nature of future society. For Marx the social integration of the individual is not an end in itself but the foundation upon which individualism can exist. For Ruhle it is as the individual is 'objectively socialised and subjectively communalised' that he is free. He must be 'wholly' merged in 'the member of the species'. Marx distinguishes those aspects of individual life which are private and those which are social and he desires that they should not conflict; Ruhle attempts a synthesis which is, in fact, a reduction of man as individual to man as a species. Ruhle's error is Collingwood's for both see Marx as a worshipper of the herd. Ruhle, however, supports such worship; Collingwood does not.

Ruhle's comment emphasises the Marxian doctrine that as social man is also national and as social and rational man is free.

(79) O. Ruhle, "Karl Marx" p. 66-7.

The socialist society - and in this the communist society too - in its collective organisation of life behaves rationally according to an agreed plan for agreed ends.

This theory is a reply to the charge that socialism is dangerous to individuality. It denies the very premises of that attack viz. that man is egotistical and a private atom whose whole relation to his fellows is one of "bellum omnium contra omnes". It accepts the real individual as the man who integrates his purposes and will with the purposes and wills of his fellows. It repudiates the "fractional", bourgeois man. Marx says Bourgeois society does not raise itself above its egoism and "society itself ... appears as an external frame for the individual, as a limitation of his original independence. The sole bond which connects him with his fellows is natural necessity and private interest, the preservation of his property and his egoistic person" (80).

Marx does not deny the existence of the 'egotistical individual'; he denies that it is a complete ~~new~~  of man and he holds that the socialist/communist society unites individuals and gives an outlet to individual egoism in socially useful activities rather than in the private struggle of economic self-interest (81).

(80) K. Marx "The Jewish Question" Quoted by Ruhle.

(81) e.g. the encouragement of 'socialist competition in the U.S.S.R. Competition is directed to communal ends.

Communism and the State

Socialism as we have seen involves:

1. The retention of the state in its "proletarian form". This retention is justified first on the ground that no change can come immediately but only as a result of evolutionary development and second, as a corollary to the above, that it is impractical to abolish the state which will automatically "wither away" when the remnants of class rule - class interests, survivors of bourgeoisie who have not accepted the change and counter-revolutionary activities - which require organised force to oppose them have been removed.

2. The temporary maintainance of wages and other monetary incentives. These although harnessed to community ends are purely transitory - a remnant of old ideas.

3. Ever widening democracy.

Communism entails the final withering away of the state in a process of increasing democratisation and decentralisation of administration. It is actively hostile to the state as such. In this it stands with Anarchism. Nevertheless Marx's theory on this point, although perhaps one of his greatest single contributions to political thought, has been one of the main sources of confusion.

Marx holds that although social man is not necessarily a member of a state. His membership of a state is a factor operative against his true social realisation. Marx, that is, by regarding the state in an empirico-historical fashion formulated a theo-

ry hostile to that identification of society and state found in Greek political thinking⁽⁸²⁾. For Marx the state is only the product of man's social nature in that it is the outgrowth of society. It is, however, a machine built out of the necessities of the maintenance of class rule. It is an institution of society produced by class-division; it is no more essential to society in its present form than class rule is essential⁽⁸³⁾.

Marx was concerned with the state as it is and was in the actual world and the factors in the actual world operating to produce the state are relations and forces of production and the struggle between classes. The state results from social contradictions. It is the central power erected in the name of order to preserve certain social and production relations and it makes permanent the division of society into ruled and ruling. The state is "man's deed become an alien power over him". It becomes consolidated into a power over society and to the control of the organs of this power political conflict is directed. It is through the state that individuals' relations with each other are regulated. It is in the interests of the privileged that, in the last analysis, the state acts through its judiciary, its executive or its legislative. It is the creation of class-society; for that reason the proletarian revolution is directed ultimately against the state.

The real human individual for Marxism is he who, liberated

(82) 'Polis', the city-state or society were identified by the Greeks.

(83) The maintenance under communism of central administrative organs is not considered the maintenance of the state. The state is, by definition, the organ of class rule.

from economic exploitation, attains freedom in the self-ruling class-less society. The state exists as a barrier to this true human freedom; and thus in a very real sense the fundamental struggle in society is the individual versus the state.

Marxism does not hold this on the same ground as those individualists for whom the state, as the embodiment of society, was the institution against which man had to struggle⁽⁸⁴⁾ or to which he had reluctantly to submit⁽⁸⁵⁾. Hostility to the State may arise from an egoistic competitive philosophy for which the individual and his bodily pleasures were basic. This view frequently regarded the state as a necessary evil on the same ground as it regarded society as an artificial creation for protection against violence.

For Marx, on the other hand, the individual and society will be truly at one when the state no longer exists. His opposition to the state derives from a view of man as naturally sociable and whilst this view places society in a position of importance it does not, as the individualist position tends to do, make social institutions more and more powerful for reasons of expediency.

The state, for Marx, embodies repression and exploitation. It is hostile to freedom. With the end of the state man becomes both lord over nature and master of himself i.e. free. The Marxian concept of freedom, then, is of paramount importance in our analysis and it is to this that we must now turn.

(84) N. Stirner, for example, and

(85) early Utilitarians.

Freedom and Necessity in Marx

We cannot entirely confine our discussion of this subject to the political sphere with which we are mainly concerned. We shall have to, in outlining Marx's view of political freedom and individual liberty, relate it to his basic dialectical synthesis of freedom and necessity.

We may, however, commence our consideration of freedom by noting the "liberal" doctrine that has become almost a truism among Western political theorists. This, the doctrine of social atomism, is stated by Prof. H.J. Laski⁽⁸⁶⁾ as follows : "Liberty means absence of restraint; it is essentially a negative thing". This view is to be found in Hobbes and in the Utilitarians. It is implicit in individualist anarchism and underlies the competitive capitalist civilisation of the last century and a half. As anything more than a partial truth, Marx holds that, the doctrine is completely untenable as soon as man as social is related in any real and dynamic way to man as individual.

It is necessary, therefore, to qualify this negative doctrine of individualism in terms which relate the individual good and interest to that good and interest of the social whole. The view that freedom becomes qualified and limited in terms of the good of society as a whole is the theoretical justification for the increased and increasing regulation over and "interference" in the working of the economy of society which experience and practice - the basis, as we have seen, of all theory - have necessi-

(86) H.J. Laski : "Grammar of Politics" p. 146.

tated. It has become clear that "regulation is the consequence of gregariousness⁽⁸⁷⁾". It has become recognised that freedom - as Marx realised - must be interpreted in a positive manner and not merely negatively. The Marxian view is an attempt to synthesise the truths that freedom is absence of restraint with the necessitarianism of the universe as a whole and with the essentially guided quality of all true progress.

In his critique of the Gotha Programme Marx reveals that, whilst he is concerned to base individual freedom upon as much negative liberty as possible he cannot admit atomism into any clear formulation of political aims. The Gotha Programme he regards as being too full of "mere phrases". And Marx makes clear that he is aiming at a society in which not only are the instruments of labour commonly owned but their products are communal property. Individuals thus become liberated by positive social action from subordination to the division of labour. On this frame is built the co-operative communist society in which, Marx holds, is realised, through mutual aid and co-operation, the liberty of the individual.

Under communism man becomes free because, the uncertainties and dichotomies of his material life having been removed, he is free to do. He is free, that is, when he is able to create, to express his nature or his personality in his work. Marxism believes that, although this may involve freedom from restrictions from outside the individual, freedom is essentially self-determination in and through society. Regulation and restriction must be self-imposed and directed toward agreed ends. Freedom
(87) Laski, op.cit. p. 142

is compatible with necessity for it is the recognition of and integration with necessity.

"Social life", says Marx⁽⁸⁸⁾, "is essentially practical". Freedom, then, is gained by the individual when his "praxis" is integrated with the "praxis" of the community. The laws of freedom are the laws of reason. In conforming to reason and the collective rationality⁽⁸⁹⁾ of the decisions of an equalitarian society the individual is freer than in a competitive struggle of individualism. Freedom is ability to do^{and} to be what one by nature is. The positive conditions for this development must be present for freedom to be a reality. Marxism sees no contradiction between the concepts of freedom and historical necessity. It regards the idea that freedom is essentially freedom from something, i.e. as the opposite of restraint, as superficial. To a limited extent freedom is freedom from restraint. To be free, however, the individual must make his actions, his free actions "the conscious and free expression of necessity⁽⁹⁰⁾". "Freedom", says Engels in Anti-Duhring, "the recognition of necessity".

Marx holds that to be free is not to escape from the domination of natural laws; it is rather to have such knowledge of these laws that they may be directed to human ends. Freedom is the introduction into the course of natural determination of a new, positive, human determinant. This determinant is human knowledge

(88) Theses on Feuerbach

(89) As expressed in the over-all planning of the economy.

(90) G.V. Plekanov "The Individual in History", State Publishers, Moscow, 1944. p.13

human teleological (or End-giving) direction. Man is possessed of free will in so far as he can make decisions based upon accurate knowledge of the real world. It is as the universe is regular and subject to law that the content of man's judgments about it become the basis for freedom. The individual in a world he does not understand and the laws of which are unknown to him is at the mercy of trends he cannot predict; his decisions and his actions are uncertain and potentially erroneous. Recognition and understanding of the necessity to which both man and the natural world are subject gives to man a measure of freedom within necessity, for he can control and direct both himself and "external nature".

The freedom of individuals is not absolute. Individuals are factors within a larger situation and, as historical animals, they are "law-conforming". History, for Marx, is made by men, however, and "the activities of individuals cannot help being important in history" (91). It is, therefore, to the course of history that we must look for the realisation of human freedom in society - for Marxism holds, with Hegel, that history is the process of the gradual realisation of freedom. Freedom is gained in stages.

First, man, through the widening of scientific knowledge, gains an ever-increasing independence from and power over natural forces. This freedom is realised in the development of forces of production and mechanical devices. It is, however, but the first stage of freedom. The second is the control over the social

(91) G.V. Plekanov op cit p. 17

ation of collective ends. He becomes truly himself in co-operation with his fellows.

The individual is really free when the bourgeois conflict between private and general interest is removed by the abolition of private property; when the feudal concept of relations between men as human and not monetary is restored in a new form; when the bourgeois idea of human equality is replaced by the realisation that men are equal only from one point of view(93); and when reason is collectively applied through social action to the organisation and direction of society; when historical development is self-conscious and "history becomes conscious of itself".

Moral Theory

Marx, therefore, whilst rejecting the glorification of the state and the inherent conservatism of traditional Idealism, comes close in his doctrine of freedom to the Idealist position that freedom to the Idealist is self-realisation in and through society; that the individual is inseparable from his environment and that it is as he truly becomes part of it that he is free and moral.

(93) "Right", Marx argues, "by its very nature can only consist in the application of an equal standard; but unequal individuals (and they would not be individuals if they were not unequal) are only measurable by an equal standard in so far as they are brought under an equal point of view, are taken from one definite side only and nothing else seen in them, everything else being ignored."
Karl Marx : "Critique of Gothe Programme". (My emphasis)

Marx accepts the Hegelian idea that the real is rational but he insists that this means that the actual gains increasing reality as it becomes increasingly rational in the evolutionary development of society. Society can only become real through the elimination of contradictions, and for Marx the real, (i.e. the coherent), society is the free society and the individual attains reality within that society to the extent that he is in harmony with it.

In essentials this view is that of Bradley in "My Station and its Duties (94)". In this essay Bradley holds that the individual is moral as he fulfils the functions of his social position for by doing so he expresses himself as completely as he can within society - and self-expression or self-realisation is the essence of morality.

Marx's moral theory of individualism follows this doctrine very largely. Marx, however, emphasises the active rôle of the individual. He must not, Marx urges, merely be what he is; he must make himself and his environment. Self-realisation, that is, is attained^{ed} through any society, but through a dynamic and changing society in which the rôle of the individual is revolutionary.

Whilst, therefore, Marx's moral theory is revolutionary and based upon the belief that the individual and society are dialectically interdependent, there are also elements of Hobbesian materialism in it. For Marx the fundamental force within human history is not the abstract idea of freedom but the individual's struggle

for 'material' security and peace. Human morality is based firmly upon the belief that the satisfaction of material needs is the first objective both of societies and individuals. Marx, however, appreciates that selfish, egoistical individualism is self-contradictory and his materialism is modified both by his admission that society, although a historical, changing entity, is the natural end of rational beings and by his refusal to reduce man to mere matter. His moral and political theory was therefore both a culmination of individualism and a denial of social atomism.

As individualist Marx postulates as desirable, necessary and inevitable the classless, anarchist society. Marx was hostile to anarchism purely on grounds of tactics; he associated himself with its objective of a stateless community in which government is replaced by administrative^{and} force by co-operation; in which there are no external restraints placed upon the individual; in which the individual is the most important moral and political entity(95). Marx believes that coercion will be replaced by mutual agreement and "self-control" by individuals through society.

On the other hand, marxism represents the culmination of that tradition of political thought which repudiates the hedonistic and competitive individualism of Utilitarianists and others. Both this individualism - with its view that the state exists to avoid a permanent "war of all against all" - and Absolute

(95) "Free agreement and federation take (the) place of government", Kropotkin, Selections p. 115.

Idealism result in the glorification of the state and in state totalitarianism over the individual. Against these totalitarian tendencies Marx holds that "man is free by reason of his positive strength to assert his true individuality" and "that it is only in society that he develops his real nature, and the strength of his nature must be measured, not with the strength of the isolated individual, but with the strength of society(96). This doctrine demonstrates Marx's affinity to the Platonic tradition that the state (society) is man writ large.

Marxism, in short, represents a synthesis between the hedonist view and the Idealist. It recognises the truth of hedonism that man is governed by "interests" and it modifies and enriches that truth by the acceptance of the view that man is a creature of reason and, hence, a bearer of values. Man, for Marx, is a true individual as he most fully embodies that common element of reason which unites him and his fellows.

Marxism, then, is not a herd-worshipping creed; it is not hostile to individualism and it is not a doctrine which glorifies the state. It contains within it, however, aspects which, if exaggerated produce a totalitarianism basically un-Marxian but drawing their justification from Marx. It is to these that we must turn and we must decide whether they do in fact undermine our thesis that Marxism is a theory a cardinal point of which is a respect for and a protection of the individual personality.

(96) K. Marx : "The Holy Family" quoted by H. Selsam "Socialism and Ethics" p. 85.

The Effect of Methodology

It is important to investigate Marx's methodology upon his theory of the individual. The methodology of Cartesian philosophers involved the use of the mathematical and, frequently, also of Galileo's "resolutive-compositive", method. In political theory this meant the discussion of man in terms which made it possible for social problems only to be seen from the point of view of naturalism. Hence, man can be reduced to a creature governed exclusively by laws of the physical universe. In political philosophy this leads to a mechanical determinism the result of which is either to place the state in a position of supremacy over a naturally warring society or to make it neutral in a struggle between individuals for self-aggrandisement and power.

Thus it is vital for us to decide whether the methodology and, more particularly, the methodological presuppositions of Marxism run counter to the philosophy of the individual which we have so far found him to hold.

Marxism, although it represents itself as an attempt to produce a scientific theory of history, economics and political organisation, is not, basically, a philosophy derived from the mechanical transference of the categories of any special science to these branches of knowledge. Marx rejected such attempts; holding that each 'level' of reality had its own laws and should be investigated by methods peculiar to those laws. Thus, despite the use made by Marxism - particularly in the work of Engels - of terms and analogies derived from natural science, such methodology was not essential to it.

Marxism, does however, claim and attempt to be, scientific in the broad sense of searching for and discovering laws. As such it is, in a sense, hostile to its own ethical individualism.

Science has no place for the unique or for laws which admit of exceptions. It attempts to formulate precise, regular trends. Marxism attempts to do this in its study of history and to deduce scientific statements about the past and future history of mankind. It attempts to make valid predictions about future events. In the formulation of such laws it would seem the individual has no place for the individual is unique and to predict his future is to deny him freedom.

Nevertheless, it is dangerous to conclude that Marx's use of terminology derived from physical science necessarily commits him to believing that history is really analogous to physics. He uses such terms as "social forces of production" and Engels in a letter speaks of "the curve of history" which may be plotted and the average axis of ideological development seen to approach more and more nearly "parallel to the axis of the curve of economic development the longer the period and the wider the field dealt with(97)".

The individual in any thorough-going science of history must be an accident and must be opposed to the "masses" whose reactions and behaviour are predictable. This places us in a dilemma for we cannot, apparently, postulate individual freedom in the face of the known fact of regular behaviour by whole social groups.

(97) Letter to Starkenburg 1894.

Nor can we escape this dilemma by a resort to Idealist metaphysics for, as in Hegel, history is the unfolding through the dialectic of the Absolute Idea. History "works" on a regular logical pattern. Its end is teleologically determined, its development rational and inevitable. This doctrine, must be as hostile to the rôle of the individual as scientific laws applied to human history.

The Marxist response to this critique is, however, that:

First, freedom is the association through reason with the essentially rational process of history and the identification of the individual through his reason with the inherent rationale of progress.

And Second, Marxism sees the individual in two aspects - primarily as a being in the mass i.e. a member of a class, behaving in his "class" or "collective" aspect in regular predictable ways in accordance with the logic of self-interest and class-ideology. In this aspect the particular, unique qualities of individuals are ignored by observing only those actions, desires and feelings common to all and by realising that although in the mass individuals' wills clashed the result of this clash was something over and above any particular will or desire. Whatever this resultant will was called it was open to investigation scientifically and to prediction and the formulation of "laws". Marx held that it was possible empirically to show that class behaviour was governed mainly by economic motivation and that broadly it was material interest that determined the course of history and formed the basis